

Dear Parents/Carers

18<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Two things:

1. If you didn't receive my follow-up email last night, please check your Junk folder. There was a link to our Remote Learning Pages which causes some email servers to isolate the email in your junk.
2. The link to our remote learning does work. Microsoft servers are being placed under considerable pressure at the moment (Teams was down for a couple of hours yesterday) so it seems that there are some intermittent accessibility issues in opening the OneDrive area that stores all of the work.

Please check your email later this afternoon as I will be communicating with you all again before the end of the school day.

Yours sincerely

17<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

I am emailing with a further update. I have begun this letter a couple of times already and had to change as we are dealing with a very fluid situation at the moment!

The current Government advice regarding schools is that we stay open and carry on with 'business as usual.' It is clear that this is likely to become increasingly difficult as time goes on and growing numbers of people have to self-isolate.

Balshaw's is fortunate at the current time that we only have a small number of staff who are having to self-isolate. However, we are already having some issues. Although we still have plenty of soap in the toilets, we no longer have hand sanitiser in all classrooms as it is on back order until May. **Please ensure your child brings their own hand sanitiser into school.**

Current advice is that should any student, or any other member of the household in which they live, show any of the following symptoms:

- A new continuous cough
- And/or a fever/high temperature (37.8C or greater)
- All in the household **must self-isolate for 14 days.**

Should a student attend school and display either or both of the above symptoms they will be sent home and informed that they must follow the advice already outlined.

For all students who have been sent home, we have marked them with the 'Y' code for the next 14 days and they should not return within that time. Please update the school if this period of absence needs to be extended because of further exposure to people who are symptomatic.

#### **Should I keep my child at home?**

The government has created a list of factors that place people in the most vulnerable group because of increased risk of severe illness from coronavirus (COVID-19). If your child or someone in your household in this group has a condition on this list then the government advise you to undertake self-isolation.

This group includes those who are:

- aged 70 or older (regardless of medical conditions)
- under 70 with an underlying health condition listed below (ie anyone instructed to get a flu jab as an adult each year on medical grounds):
- chronic (long-term) respiratory diseases, such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), emphysema or bronchitis
- chronic heart disease, such as heart failure
- chronic kidney disease
- chronic liver disease, such as hepatitis
- chronic neurological conditions, such as Parkinson's disease, motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis (MS), a learning disability or cerebral palsy
- diabetes
- problems with your spleen – for example, sickle cell disease or if you have had your spleen removed

- a weakened immune system as the result of conditions such as HIV and AIDS, or medicines such as steroid tablets or chemotherapy
- being seriously overweight (a BMI of 40 or above)
- those who are pregnant

If you think that your child will place someone in your household at greater risk because they have one of these conditions or your child has one, please let us know if you are keeping them at home. I would support such a decision and they will be given the appropriate absence code.

#### **Remote Learning Link for all parents and students:**

Clicking on this link will take you to a set of folders containing remote learning that your child can do if you are self-isolating. These folders are being added to over the course of the rest of this week. If school closes for any length of time then the work in these folders will be developed further.

[https://balshawspreston-my.sharepoint.com/:f/g/personal/covid19remotelearn\\_balshaws\\_org\\_uk/ElszkTD5YuxDqvo15-v6YksBeSb0UvNUaNBRE0YgOLGImA](https://balshawspreston-my.sharepoint.com/:f/g/personal/covid19remotelearn_balshaws_org_uk/ElszkTD5YuxDqvo15-v6YksBeSb0UvNUaNBRE0YgOLGImA)

#### **Partial School Closure**

In the event that student/teacher/support staff ratios reach the point where it is neither safe nor practical for school to remain open to **all** students we will first **partially close the school**. This will be decided on a daily basis, dependent upon the number of staff available.

Should this be a necessity **we will endeavour to inform parents on the afternoon before the partial closure** in order to support them in making appropriate arrangements; this may not always be possible, however, due to the nature of the virus. **As a result, please ensure you view the school website and check your e-mails regularly; this is where any information regarding school closure will be posted.**

Year 11 will be the school's priority during this time and, as such, it is unlikely that they will be asked to remain at home unless the decision is taken to close the school as a whole.

#### **Whole School Closure**

This will take place only as a last resort and may occur for a number of reasons.

- The school may close fully in the event of Government instruction that all schools close
- The school may have to close fully, on the advice of Public Health England, for a 'deep clean' should there be a significant number of students and/or staff with symptoms of the virus.
- The school may close fully, after discussion with the appropriate authorities, should the number of staff either displaying symptoms of the virus, or self-isolating due to Government advice, mean that the health and welfare of students is compromised.

#### **PGL Trip:**

You should already have heard from Mrs Lupton about the PGL trip. We have deferred this trip and will arrange for a different date when it is possible once again to undertake 'unnecessary' social interaction.

#### **In conclusion:**

If you do find yourself having to self-isolate and are not unwell yourself, try to make the most of this as an opportunity. Perhaps you could learn to develop a new skill using YouTube, have time together to learn some card games. Read a good book or practice a musical instrument. We can all use any time of enforced isolation to try to develop ourselves for the better – not least by undertaking your remote learning during the school day.

For now, we will keep pressing on for as long as possible or until we are advised otherwise.

Yours sincerely

Mr Steven Haycocks